

RIVERWAYS

September 12, 2003
News Notes #7

from the Massachusetts Riverways Programs (www.massriverways.org)

Adopt-A-Stream intensifies technical support to Community Projects

Dear River Advocates,

As we have worked with you and learned from experience in the field over the last sixteen years, each of the Riverways Programs has evolved to meet the needs of the Commonwealth's rivers and the people and groups that care about them. In response to requests from the river constituency, Riverways' **Adopt-A-Stream Program (AAS)** is becoming more project-oriented in order to help groups implement their Shoreline Survey-based Action Plans. AAS's focus for 2003 is to offer scientific and other technical assistance for Action Plan implementation and more targeted scientific surveys as a follow-up to the basic Shoreline Survey. Technical services provided by AAS staff range from site-specific help on riparian buffer repair, public access and stormwater management, to a limited number of longer-term projects for Stream Teams that include identification of grant sources and assistance on preparing grant proposals for specific projects, such as habitat analysis and water conservation. The targeted follow-up surveys, which can be completed by any and all Stream Teams, include the **Riparian Survey, Stormwater Survey, Dam Reconnaissance Survey, Bridge Survey** and **River Continuity Culvert Surveys**. [To read more about River Continuity, see the previous edition of Riverways News Notes (#6)].

In addition, all Riverways technical staff and programs--River Restore, Stream Ecologist, RIFLS (River Instream Flow Stewards), Rivers Advocate and Grants Administrator--have been working more closely with Stream Teams as they implement their Action Plans.

Because Stream Teams have repeatedly expressed concern about the **need to change the individual habits of people** living and working in their watersheds in order to achieve lasting results in the effort to reduce nonpoint source pollution, the Adopt-A-Stream Program recently applied for (and has just received) a \$319 grant through USEPA/MADEP to use **social marketing** and other means to overcome barriers to the more widespread adoption of stormwater management techniques on residential property.

As of this date, collaborating with Watershed Associations, Wild and Scenic Committees and town officials, AAS staff have trained over 100 Stream Teams in the Shoreline Survey process. Through the development of Stream Teams, community by community, river by river, we work together to promote local awareness about issues relating to water quality, instream flow, habitat, recreation and waterfront revitalization.

Implementation projects have included new canoe access sites, walking trails and canoe trails, pollution prevention and habitat restoration. Because the first step in the Shoreline Survey process is to create local steering committees (with municipal participation), the Adopt-A-Stream process ensures that the resulting projects are community-driven and supported by municipal officials. We have found that the existence of community Stream Teams allows unique linkages between state agencies and towns, between towns within watersheds, and offers a community-based link between watershed associations, towns and state agencies. Stream Teams are a logical local partnership connection for all levels of government, businesses and individual citizens. This fall, AAS is hosting a **Stream Team Workshop** in the Northeast region of the state (but open to anyone interested) on **Wednesday, October 1st** to give Stream Teams an opportunity to discuss and brainstorm river projects; call Amy Singler at 617-626-1548 or go on-line to <http://www.massriverways.org> for more details.

AAS staff will continue to provide training, facilitate the Action Planning meetings, oversee the drafting of the Action Plans and reports and support implementation of projects chosen to remedy problems identified by the Stream Teams. Stream Team Shoreline Survey findings and Action Plan recommendations have been incorporated into DEP water quality assessments, Watershed Action Plans and for local implementation projects. The Adopt-A-Stream Program served as the model for the pilot Lake/Watershed Stewardship Program, also funded through \$319 funds through USEPA/MADEP.

Riverways was very gratified recently to read Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA)'s Executive Director Ian Cooke's words about the long-term positive impact of our partnership programs. Back in 1994, AAS staff collaborated with NepRWA to establish a number of Stream Teams. Ian updated us on the effect of our efforts by saying: *"The great thing about Riverways is that the state gets out so much more than they put in. Here in the Neponset Valley, Riverways invested in a small group of volunteers during 1994, and eight years later there are more than 150 volunteers working on the river every month, supported by more than 1,000 private donors, and together we've restored 90 miles of stream to swimmable quality. Riverways is like the push without which the giant snowball would never get started."*

Although there are many, many Stream Teams whose excellent work we could showcase to illustrate the potential of the Adopt-A-Stream process for achieving long term river protection restoration and stewardship, this edition of *Riverways NewsNotes* highlights the recent work of the **First Herring Brook Watershed Initiative** because of their partnerships and their successes, including a colorful description of the Shoreline Survey process itself by one of the Team members. Following this lead story you will find a brief Resources and Grants section.

See you on the rivers.....

Joan Kimball

[Adopt-A-Stream Program: First Herring Brook Grants](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/river/newsnotessept03.htm)

Online Resources and Calendar

First Herring Brook Watershed Initiative: An Example of Adopt-A-Stream in Action.

A small coastal stream in the North River watershed, First Herring Brook and its watershed are significant natural resources in the Town of Scituate. The stream and its watershed serve as important natural habitat while providing much of the Town's drinking water. A group of concerned local citizens formed the First Herring Brook Watershed Initiative (FHBWI), which began working with Riverways and the Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) Program as they formed their executive committee in April of 1999. Following a meeting with the Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator, they decided that a Shoreline Survey would help them in the process of mapping the First Herring Brook and looking at the relationship between the stream, the town water supply and its ecological health. They also felt that involving citizens and students in a Shoreline Survey would wake up residents of all ages to this beautiful stream and its ponds and to the health and safety of its water supply.

FHBWI soon saw the applicability of using a Shoreline Survey as part of a project to make sure that there was an accurate understanding of the watershed system and the diverse needs of humans and wildlife populations. In the meantime, FHBWI applied for and was awarded a Source Water Protection Grant through the Department of Environmental Protection. Finding that the key components of the brook/water supply system were not accurately depicted on any of the maps —USGS, GIS, zoning—that served as the basis for a wide range of land management activities, they designed to systematically assess the watershed for current or potential impairment to water quality, to flood storage capacity, to ecological health of the other vital functions and to educate the community about the watershed.

The field tasks were critical to the project. Using the Adopt-A-Stream protocols and following a training by the Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator, the group conducted 20 Shoreline Surveys of First Herring Brook and other surface water tributaries that make up the drinking water system in Scituate. The Shoreline Surveys provided a critical component of the project to provide baseline data within the watershed. Field observations were very important to the project because large sections of the watershed are covered with thick underbrush or marshy conditions. Before the survey, much of what was known about the watershed came from remote observations such as aerial photographs. As they planned the Survey, the group tailored the survey process to include measuring tapes and compasses to help estimate the size and location of features, the width and depths of stream channels, the direction of flow, the location of the discharge pipes and other significant features.

In addition to the Shoreline Survey protocols developed by the Adopt-A-Stream Program, the group used the Riparian Area Survey that had been cooperatively designed by the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and the Adopt-A-Stream program. Following the surveys, the Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator facilitated an action planning meeting to ensure that the group considered each of the priority findings and came to consensus on appropriate actions for each.

The FHBWI then partnered with Comprehensive Environmental Inc. to create a Source Water Protection

Plan for Scituate that included the findings from their Shoreline Survey Action Plan. Many of the First Herring Brook tributaries are unnamed, and some are not mapped. FHBWI has since completed an inventory of all of the surface water resources in the watershed.

The FHBWI has benefited from the expertise of their steering committee members, many of whom are professional scientists, planners and naturalists. The group has attracted a wide audience for local hikes, “swamp romps” and educational talks. They have been very successful at involving broad sections of the community in Biodiversity Days events and have started an environmental club with a local middle school with the help of an EOE Outdoor Classroom grant.

First Herring Brook and other Town waterways and wetlands have also benefited from the countless hours of volunteer time put in by FHBWI members. Volunteers have borrowed GPS units from AAS to certify and map locations of vernal pools, locate tributaries and wetlands, and protect watershed resources. They have conducted macroinvertebrate sampling in several locations, aided by one of the group members who is a biologist. Learning as they go, these volunteers are ready to take on new activities and learn new tasks, like sorting mayfly larvae or identifying significant wildlife habitat.

The volunteers and members of the FHBWI have been remarkably diverse. The participants are linked by their shared interest in learning about the watershed and its protection. Their commitment has shown itself on many occasions when surveys were conducted in rain, freezing temperatures and through thick and buggy swamps. These team members have always gone above and beyond to collect information about the watershed.

Because the group has learned so much about the watershed and has recorded so much information, FHBWI has been ready to combat threats to the local resources and take on challenges. Besides documenting 10 occurrences of listed rare species and locating and certifying 16 vernal pools, thereby enhancing their protected status, FHBWI was instrumental in getting the Community Preservation Act passed in Scituate. Thanks to these and many other achievements, FHBWI leader Lance Van Lenten was given a well-deserved EPA Environmental Achievement Award this past spring.

To continue their interest in preserving instream flow to support aquatic life while providing water supply to meet human needs, FHBWI looked for information about inflow and outflow at the reservoir. Finding little or no information—not an uncommon occurrence—FHBWI requested support from Riverways/RIFLS (River Instream Flow Stewards) Program. Accepted as one of the pilot groups, FHBWI is working with Margaret Kearns, RIFLS Scientist/Coordinator and Cindy Delpapa, Stream Ecologist, who are establishing a stream gage and a flow “rating curve” so that volunteers can document seasonal flows, thus providing another source of information for decision making to ensure that growth does not impair the ecological health of the stream and its watershed.

According to Lance Van Lenten, “*This would not have happened without the tremendous support and inspiration of Riverways staff. Volunteers in Scituate and many other residents throughout the Commonwealth have used Riverways methods to collect information vital to the protection of our water and habitat resources. The cost for hiring consultants for this kind of*

work would be enormous and the results would not have the high amount of personal interest and commitment that comes from stakeholders being involved in the process.”

Involving stakeholders, such as the members of FHBWI, in water protection also results in educated community members who retain the expertise. In Scituate, following the study, the Selectmen (who also serve as the Water Commissioners), have appointed three members of the FHBWI to the five-member town Water Study Committee. The Town Water Study Committee plans to utilize the results of the RIFLS measurements of inflow and outflow to develop a water budget for the water supply reservoir and will use the results for future water resources planning. The project benefited both Scituate and Cohasset. FHBWI documented an unmapped tributary to Cohasset's Aaron River Reservoir that was quickly verified by Cohasset's Water Commission consultants. As a result, the Cohasset surface water supply watershed boundary was extended to include a special “shared watershed” area that overlaps the First Herring Brook watershed. The amended boundary was subsequently documented in Cohasset's Surface Water Protection Plan. Lance Van Lenten believes that “this exchange of pertinent information is an excellent example of neighboring communities working together to protect their resources, a positive aspect of teamwork strongly emphasized by the Adopt-A-Stream Program.”

The Stream Team - Shoreline Survey Process at Work

By John Podgurski, Shoreline Survey Coordinator, First Herring Brook Watershed Initiative

About the Process...

The stream survey, in many respects, reflects the very heart of what the FHBWI is all about. To fully understand and appreciate the value of the watershed and associated ecosystem, it is important to slip on the rubber boots, slog through the mud and bramble, and observe it first hand. No amount of topo maps, aerial photos, or sampling studies could give you the same perspective.

Similarly, although the information obtained through the stream survey will be useful in evaluating and monitoring stream conditions, the very process of making observations and gathering information increases awareness and builds a sense of stewardship. In the end, it is that stewardship that best describes our mission.

It is our hope that as the FHBWI members develop a better understanding and appreciation of the watershed, they will serve as effective advocates for its protection. This advocacy serves a critical function. Even though the town government has the primary responsibility to ensure a safe and adequate water supply, they do not have the resources to extensively survey each tributary or to inventory the watershed's unique geologic and ecological features. The stream survey is designed to do just that. The information obtained will hopefully help the town protect its water supply, identify opportunities for passive recreational uses, establish priorities for open space preservation, and provide a host of other benefits.

The people that have participated on the stream surveys represent a broad cross-section of the local

population. Whether you consider age, occupation or other defining characteristics, the participants have been impressively diverse. And while we have been fortunate to have some members with extensive knowledge of field biology and other natural sciences, the majority of the participants do not. Probably the only commonality is a shared interest in learning about the watershed and a commitment to its protection.

That sense of commitment has been demonstrated in numerous ways. Whether by bad judgement or bad luck, the stream surveys were conducted on days that were either very cold or followed in the wake of heavy rains. None of this appeared to have stemmed the enthusiasm of the volunteers, who showed up in full force to complete the surveys. And complete them they did, even if this meant making a headlong scramble through a briar patch or wading through ice-cold water. In many cases they worked well beyond their assigned stream sections to explore the terrain "just around one more bend".

Each survey team was assigned to a specific stream segment approximately one hundred yards long. The size of the team generally ranged from two to six people. One person was designated the "team leader", which meant that they had the responsibility to complete the field survey forms. The teams were encouraged to take photos of the general terrain and to document unique or otherwise notable features.

A "typical" survey experience...

Arriving at the designated meeting spot with clipboard, field survey forms, camera, and measuring tape in hand, Linda Bornstein and I set out to make our observations. The starting point for this segment was the intersection of First Parish Brook Road with an unnamed tributary. We were pleased that we would be working down stream from this spot; the upstream banks were covered by nearly impenetrable brush. Commitment is one thing, but there are limits.

We immediately noted a potential route of contamination. Run-off from the road had a direct path to the stream by way of a concrete apron that channeled flow down the banks. To make matters worse, the road in either direction slopes steeply to the stream, greatly increasing the potential amount of run-off.

After recording general stream flow conditions, visual water properties, the nature of the streambed, surrounding vegetation and other observations, we made our way down the embankment and headed down stream. Although the stream channel was only about five to eight feet wide, it was obvious that in periods of high water the stream would overrun its banks to flood a much larger area. Much of the surrounding topography was very flat and there was ample evidence of natural debris having been deposited by flood waters. This was an excellent illustration of how wetlands can serve a valuable role in flood control by creating storage capacity in time of high water. Throughout this section we also identified several smaller intermittent streams that discharged into this tributary.

Linda and I observed that this segment provided some very valuable wildlife habitat. There was extensive tree coverage to offer protection and a source of food, and the stream itself was well shaded and contained large rocks and fallen trees to create pools and help aerate the water.

The stream was fairly shallow, averaging less than a foot in most places. This proved useful to us, as we sometime waded through the streambed rather than fight the thick brush that often covered the banks.

We were both struck by how quickly the noise and distractions of the nearby roads dissolved once we entered the tree cover. The gentle gurgling of the stream, which would easily have been drowned out by traffic, became the dominant sound. It reminded me of the hundreds of times I have driven past this area without any recognition of what is here and the values it provides.

We soon came to a feature that would mark the end of this stream segment, a flat area surrounded by steep banks at least a couple feet high and about thirty feet in diameter. The stream worked its way through the center of this basin and cut through the downstream embankment and continued on. It wasn't clear whether this portion of the bank was deliberately constructed to create a small pond, but I suspect that it was. It was something worth noting in any event. Perhaps with some future effort the breach could be dammed for the benefit of the wildlife inhabiting the area.

Linda and I would have liked to have continued further, but the day was cold and our hands were already numb from a survey we did earlier that morning. As it was, even making notes was becoming a challenge because of the need to remove my mittens. So we headed back to our cars leaving further exploration to another day.

In the months that have passed since that first survey, I am struck by the sense of connection I feel to what I now view as "my section" of the stream. I have since gone back a couple of times just to notice seasonal changes. No matter how, or if, the information we collected gets used, I would have to call my first stream survey a triumphant success.



RESOURCES AND GRANTS

Grants

The **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)**'s **Bring Back the Natives** grants program supports on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that benefit native aquatic species (e.g., native fish, aquatic insects, mollusks, and amphibians) in their historic ranges. Applicants should follow the Foundation's General Challenge Grant Guidelines and the associated timeline. **October 15, 2003** is the pre-proposal deadline; full proposals are due December 1, 2003 with notification received by March 31, 2004. More info is on-line at http://nfwf.org/programs/grant_apply.htm.

The Northeastern Area (NA) of the **U.S. Forest Service (USFS)** recently issued a Request for Proposals for the FY04 round of **Forestry Innovation Grants**. One of the three themes this grant round is "**Clean Water and Healthy Watersheds**". The overall goal of this Theme is to promote watershed health and restoration through the establishment, restoration and sound stewardship of trees and forests. The Theme

encourages taking a targeted watershed approach to assessment, planning, education, and demonstration projects that reduce storm water or flooding, improve air quality, protect water quality, restore aquatic habitat, and reduce pollution. Primary objectives are to: protect and improve drinking water supplies and the management of source water watersheds; protect and enhance the health of urbanizing watersheds; use forestry to enhance water quality and restore streams, wetlands, and aquatic habitats in agricultural landscapes; enhance the quality application of Forestry BMPs and the measurement of their success in protecting water quality; better understand and communicate the value of trees and forests in protecting and restoring watershed health, reducing pollution, and protecting wildlife and fish habitat; and expand partnerships between States and watershed or conservation organizations. Grant awards are expected to be in the range of \$25-100,000. Projects require a 50:50 match from non-federal funding sources (matching funds can include in-kind services). Project timeline is 2 years once a grant is issued. The application **deadline** for submitting projects to the State Forester (who then recommends projects to the USFS) is **10/23/03** (a later deadline of **11/11/03** may apply in some cases). For questions regarding preparation and processing of proposals, contact **Dave Welsch** at the USFS's Durham Field Office [603-868-7616, dwelsch@fs.fed.us] or **Eric Seaborn** of the Mass. Urban and Community Forestry Program [617-626-1468, eric.seaborn@state.ma.us].

The **Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment** is soliciting proposals for coastal and **riverine habitat restoration projects** (including engineering studies, restoration work, and post-restoration monitoring) in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. This program is funded through a \$430,000 grant from NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. Awards will range between \$5,000 and \$25,000 for site-specific project design and planning activities and \$10,000 to \$50,000 for project implementation including monitoring associated with the site specific restoration activities. Awards outside of these ranges will also be considered. All grants should target at least a 1:1 non-federal match. Match may be in cash, time, goods, or services. Work conducted for the project is to be complete within 18-24 months of contract approval. Letters of intent (optional, but recommended) are due by **September 29** and final applications are due by **November 14**. For contact information and the full Request for Proposals, see <http://gulfofmaine.org/council/opportunities/>.

The **Mass. Department of Environmental Protection** (DEP) plans to hold a Pre - RFR Informational Meeting to discuss potential projects before the Request For Responses (RFR) for the FY04 grant round of \$604(b) **nonpoint source pollution watershed assessment grants** is issued. It is recommended that potential respondents attend this meeting which is expected to be held in the Chicopee Room, 2nd Floor, DEP's Central Regional Office in Worcester on **Wednesday, October 15, 2003** from 10:00 AM to Noon to discuss your ideas on new projects for priority watersheds. The focus of the FY2004 grants will be for watershed or subwatershed-based nonpoint source assessment activities that support DEP's Massachusetts Estuaries Project, TMDL development efforts, water supply source protection planning projects, or activities that are identified in watershed action plans (see <http://www.state.ma.us/envir/water/publications.htm>). Respondents, however, are encouraged to propose other suitable water quality assessment/planning projects. According to the 5-year basin planning cycle, priority or target watersheds for FFY04 include the **Deerfield, Millers, Shawsheen, Ipswich, Buzzards Bay, Islands, Farmington, Westfield, Sudbury/Assabet/Concord, South Coastal** and **Taunton** basins. For more information, contact Gary Gonyea

[(617)-556-1152, gary.gonyea@state.ma.us] or go on-line to

<http://www.state.ma.us/dep/brp/mf/othergrt.htm> or http://www.comm-pass.com/Comm-PASS/Scripts/xdoc_view.idc?doc_id=015429&dept_code=EQE&cp_xx.

Last but not least, the **Massachusetts Environmental Trust** (MET) has established three priority program areas for its upcoming FY04 grant round - Ecosystem Health and Biological Diversity, Human Health and the Environment, and Environmental Education. Letter of Inquiry for FY2004 is due **November 1, 2003**; full proposals (if invited) are due March 1 2004. Go on-line to <http://www.massenvironmentaltrust.org/> for more info.

Stream Team Implementation Awards available for the Housatonic and SuAsCo Watersheds

The Adopt-A-Stream Program is announcing Stream Team Implementation Awards for Stream Team work in the SuAsCo and Housatonic Watersheds. The awards can be used by existing Stream Teams to implement projects or by local watershed associations or municipal boards to help start new Stream Teams. In both watersheds, where Stream Teams are well established, priority will be given to implementation projects. Current Stream Teams can use the awards to implement projects from their Action Plan. The Adopt-A-Stream Program can also work with these Stream Teams to provide additional technical assistance on the projects. Awards will range from \$500 to \$2,000. All projects must be completed by June 30, 2004. The awards are a reimbursement for services basis. Applications must be submitted through a qualified 501c3 organization or a municipality. Stream Teams are encouraged to work in partnership with their town Conservation Commission or Planning Board, watershed association, land trust, etc. Stream Teams are encouraged to contact the Adopt-A-Stream Program (617-626-1549 or 413-773-5031) to discuss project ideas before the release of the mid-October Request for Responses. See the article in this newsletter for examples of last years' grant projects in the Ipswich and Parker Rivers Watersheds. When available, the RFR will be available on the [Adopt-A-Stream Program website](#).

ON-LINE RESOURCES

E – The Environmental Magazine

<http://www.emagazine.com>

Now in its second decade of publication, E Magazine is an independent, nonprofit periodical (six issues/year) devoted to environmental issues. Quite a few of the items in the Resources and Grants section of prior Riverways Newsletters and NewsNotes have been gleaned from this magazine. The September/October 2003 issue of E features a great cover story on the burgeoning bottled water industry by Brian Howard entitled "*Message in a Bottle*" (see http://www.emagazine.com/september-october_2003/0903feat1.html). Here's a brief excerpt: "The [marketing] message is clear: Bottled water is "good" water, as opposed to that nasty, unsafe stuff that comes out of the tap. But in most cases tap water adheres to stricter purity standards than bottled water, whose source can be wells underneath industrial facilities. Indeed, 40 percent of bottled water began life as, well, tap water." The same issue contains a great editorial by Publisher Doug Moss on

the same subject called “*All Bottled Up*” (see http://www.emagazine.com/september-october_2003/0903eword.html).

Fly Rod and Reel Magazine

<http://www.flyrodreel.com/>

The on-line version of this magazine includes a generous archive of conservation articles by Massachusetts outdoor writer Ted Williams. Although most if not all of Ted’s articles are worth reading, *NewsNotes* readers might find “*Upstream And Out Of Mind: The feds abandon protection for our headwater streams*” (<http://www.flyrodreel.com/conservation0603.html>) of particular interest, as it eloquently describes the ecological functions and values of smaller streams and how changes to the coverage of the Clean Water Act proposed by the Bush Administration might exclude some or all of these streams from federal protection against pollutant discharges.

Gulf of Maine Times

<http://www.gulfofmaine.org/times/summer2003/index.htm>

Published by the **Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment** (see **Grants** above), the Summer 2003 on-line issue of the *Times* features an excellent article by Ethan Nadeau about the importance of **alewife** to interrelated organisms and coastal river watersheds (click on “Science Insights” under “Current Stories” on the left portion of the page). Elsewhere on the Gulf of Maine Council website is some useful information on the functions and values of **riparian buffers** (http://www.gulfofmaine.org/knowledgebase/riparian_buffers/default.asp).

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (LILP)

<http://www.lincolninst.edu>

Headquartered on Brattle St. next to the historic Longfellow House in Cambridge, LILP supports academic research and scholarship on all aspects of land policy, especially property taxation. LILP’s extensive website provides on-line versions of many of its publications, including its *LandLines* newsletter. A recent *LandLines* article of particular interest to *NewsNotes* readers is entitled “*Linking Growth and Land Use to Water Supply*” (<http://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/pub-detail.asp?id=794>) by Matthew McKinney.

CALENDAR

Mass. Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Office of

Public-Private Partnerships, is hosting an event at **Walden Pond State Reservation** on **Friday, September 19th at 9:00 AM** in celebration of the tenth anniversary of **National Public Lands Day** (NPLD, <http://www.npld.com/background.htm>). NPLD promotes shared stewardship for our public lands and celebrates the unique public/private partnerships involving many federal, state, and local land agencies, as well as numerous volunteers, who participate in those efforts. **The Trustees of Reservations**, the **Mass. Land Trust Coalition** (<http://www.massland.org>) and other open space protection groups are encouraging your attendance at this event to help demonstrate the strong grassroots support for land conservation in the Commonwealth.

Governor Mitt Romney will be taking part in a volunteer stewardship trails restoration project at Walden Pond that morning and will also participate in the speaking program. After the speaking program, you will have the opportunity to take a nature hike around Walden Pond, experience a living history presentation by an historian speaking as Henry David Thoreau at the replica of Thoreau's house, or walk to the actual house site where Thoreau lived from 1845 to 1847 and where he wrote Walden. Participants will also be invited to place an unmarked, small rock on the "cairn" at the house site established as a memorial to Thoreau in 1872. For more information, contact Betsy Shure Gross, Director, Office of Public Private Partnerships, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs [617-626-1117, betsy.shuregross@state.ma.us].

Clean Water Action (CWA) is sponsoring a **New England Regional Drinking Water Protection Conference** entitled "*Working Together to Protect Our Drinking Water at the Source*" to be held in Worcester, MA on **October 17 and 18** (Fri.-Sat.). The keynote speaker is attorney **Jan Schlichtmann** (of "*A Civil Action*" fame). Friday's session will be geared towards municipal officials such as city/regional planners, Boards of Health, Conservation Commissions, and City Council/Selectman members; while Saturday will be aimed toward concerned citizens from land trusts, watershed groups and local environmental organizations. People are free to attend both days (e.g., you don't have to be a municipal official to attend on Friday). The registration fee is a very reasonable \$15/day (breakfast and lunch included). Workshops include funding for Source Water Protection, Smart Growth and Green Infrastructure to Protect Water Sources, Toxics in Drinking Water and Your Health, and Organizing Your Community to Protect Your Water. For more information and to RSVP, contact Mike Davis at CWF [(617) 338-8131 or mdavis@cleanwater.org].

How do we create sustainability in an era of rampant sprawl, housing shortages and shrinking public services? Can we create a better balance between the needs of our natural environment and the needs of people to have a place to live and work? While many of the traditional land preservation tools - such as purchasing land, legislating protection and limiting access - have been effective in the past, increasingly communities are finding that these tools are losing out to faster moving population and development pressures. These and related issues will be addressed in a conference at Merrimack College in Andover, MA on **Saturday, Nov. 8th** (8:30AM-4PM) entitled "*Shaping the Future of Essex County:- Practical Solutions for Sustainable Growth*". Sponsored by the **Essex County Community Foundation's** Essex County Forum for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and the Environmental Science Department at Merrimack College, this conference will engage leaders and citizens from throughout Essex County to learn how we can plan for a more sustainable future.

Featured speakers include: Governor Mitt Romney (invited), Annie Harris, Exec. Dir. Essex National Heritage Commission, Jon Lyon, Co-Director of Environmental Science at Merrimack College, Rep. Doug Petersen, member of the Zoning Reform Task Force, Marc Draisen (invited), Exec. Dir. MAPC and Marianne Paley, Program Director, Groundwork Lawrence. The registration fee is only \$25 (includes continental breakfast and lunch). To receive complete conference and registration information, contact Lee Cunningham, Program Director, The Environmental Stewardship Initiative at the Essex County Community Foundation (l.cunningham@eccf.org, 978-887-8876 x 19).

Miscellaneous

Starting in September, **River Network** (<http://www.rivernetwork.org>) will send out a regular announcement to the national media highlighting the latest news and events from the river and watershed community. If you are interested in having your organization featured, please email your news to Glin Varco at gvarco@rivernetwork.org. Press releases, media alerts and all the best fish stories welcomed and encouraged.

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